

25X1

22 July 1986

TALKING POINTS FOR THE ADDISandinista Crackdown on Opposition

In our judgment, Managua fears that expanded rebel activity and US assistance to domestic opponents will increase prospects for the development of an internal front.

- The Sandinistas likely see continued criticism from the Church, signs of increased activism by the political opposition, and the rapidly deteriorating economy as potential contributors to the growth of both rural and urban insurgent support networks. [REDACTED]

25X1

In recent weeks, the regime has sharply contracted the political space allowed to its opponents.

- Managua closed the only independent newspaper, La Prensa, denied the Catholic Church spokesman reentry into Nicaragua, and forced a bishop into exile.
- In addition, state security placed two Church lay leaders under virtual house arrest, strip-searched a private sector leader at Sandino Airport, and temporarily detained several mid-level officials of the Social Christian Party.
- The Sandinista-dominated National Assembly recently revoked the immunity of an assembly deputy--member of the independent Conservative Party faction--on apparently trumped-up charges to weaken the faction's legislative influence. [REDACTED]

25X1

We believe the Sandinista leadership has put aside differences over tactics and is united in its determination to suppress any challenges to its goal of establishing a Marxist-Leninist regime. Thus, we expect Managua to tolerate only the most docile of domestic opposition groups.

- Regime spokesmen say the enforcement of state-of-emergency provisions had been too flexible and will now be carried out with the full force of the law.
- In addition, Managua has indicated that any domestic opponents who make statements that can be construed as supporting the insurgents will be dealt with swiftly. [REDACTED]

25X1

SECRET

- The Church--considered by regime leaders to be their most potent adversary--will be a special target, and Cardinal Obando y Bravo will run the risk of expulsion if he makes any statements that buttress the insurgent cause.

25X1

- Harassment of second-echelon leaders in the political opposition and private sector by state security agents is likely. Moreover, the Sandinistas may increase land confiscations and move against the "after hours" schools run by some of the independent parties to impart democratic values to local youths.

- Managua publicly has stated it will allow politicians to use the media to criticize--but not "destabilize"--the government and will continue to permit small party gatherings.

25X1

We expect the regime will use its growing internal security capabilities to step up large-scale sweeps in rural areas while monitoring the domestic opposition and US presence in the cities.

25X1

SECRET